



Conservation District Operations

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Michigan's conservation districts are a local units of government like counties or townships. They utilize local, state, federal, and private sector resources to deliver conservation programming designed to solve today's agricultural and natural resource problems. Conservation districts are the primary mechanism by which the Michigan Department of Agriculture and Rural Development (MDARD) delivers conservation programs to private landowners. MDARD helps conservation districts operate in a manner consistent with applicable laws and provides program delivery support.

IMPACT FOR MICHIGAN:

Michigan's agriculture and forest products industry is a \$117 billion sector of the state's economy. Conservation districts deliver \$6.65 million in MDARD programs including the:

- Michigan Agriculture Environmental Assurance Program;
- Forestry Assistance Program;
- Conservation Technical Assistance Initiative;
- Michigan Produce Safety Program; and
- Michigan Pheasant Restoration Initiative.

Conservation programming is most effective when delivered at the local level, by local people, with local technical assistance

FY18 ACCOMPLISHMENTS:

- Increased the quantity and quality of trainings offered to conservation districts resulting in 77 board directors and 54 district managers participating in core training.
- Received 175 survey responses on how to improve the approaches and effectiveness of services provided to conservation districts by MDARD.
- Participated in 54 grant goal setting meetings, using program metric data to increase the output of conservation program grant activities delivered through conservation districts.
- Certified 44 elections for conservation district board directors.

MEASURING SUCCESS:

Metric	FY16	FY17	FY18
Number of conservation districts	77	75	75
Number of district managers	73	69	70
Total district staff	244	199	282
Number of districts receiving grants	61	62	57
Total number of grants to districts	124	135	127
Value of ESD grants	\$5.9M	\$6.2M	\$6.65M
Board meeting participation	172	127	163
Quarterly financial evaluations	323	692*	383
Search and selection processes	44	35	40
District capacity building occasions	138	135	52
District employee development assistance	67	51	36

*Includes financial evaluations from the last quarter of fiscal year 2017 typically counted towards the following fiscal year.

FY19 PROGRAM GOALS:

- Improve communication and cooperation with core conservation partners.
- Support ongoing efforts to restore operational funding to conservation districts.
- Update the conservation districts operations manual with current, relevant guidance.
- Continue to grow core training opportunities for conservation district board directors and staff.
- Improve the approach and effectiveness of services provided by MDARD to conservation districts.



KEY STAKEHOLDERS

- Conservation district staff and boards
- Michigan landowners
- Federal and state partnering agencies
- Users of Michigan's natural resources

LEGAL AUTHORITY:

- Natural Resources and Environmental Protection Act, Public Act 451 of 1994, Part 93 (Soil Conservation Districts), as amended